UNITE	STATES	DIST	TRICT	COURT	
EASTERN	DISTRIC	T OF	PENNS	THAVITY	Д

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, ) 05-cr-440-13 ) vs. ) ) JAMES MORRIS, ) Philadelphia, PA ) November 12, 2010 Defendant. ) 9:39 a.m.

TRANSCRIPT OF SENTENCING
BEFORE THE HONORABLE R. BARCLAY SURRICK
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

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\*\*\*Transcriber's Note: Defendant's microphone was not on. It was very difficult at times to hear defendant and defense counsel.

Colloquy 3

THE COURT: Okay. We have the case of <u>United States</u>

<u>versus James Morris</u>. It's number 5-440-13. Counsel, please

identify yourselves.

MR. BRESNICK: Good morning, Your Honor. Michael Bresnick for the Government. With me is Ray Armstrong from IRS.

MR. POWELL: Good morning, Judge. Wayne Powell appearing on behalf of the defendant James Morris.

MR. THOMPSON: Good morning, Your Honor. Ron Thompson also appearing on behalf of James Morris.

THE COURT: All right. Counsel, we were here on -- I think it was November 2nd for sentencing. An issue arose at that time with regard to the 851 notice that the Government had filed. And we recessed to give counsel an opportunity to take a look at it and to determine exactly where you -- your respective positions were.

Now, the record reflects that the Government, in fact, filed the 851 notice on December 18, 2007 at 9:08 a.m. The record also reflects that the Court met with counsel in this courtroom at 10:11 a.m. to discuss the jury selection process. We talked with counsel and then went down to the central jury room to hand out a questionnaire to the jurors. We went down to hand out that questionnaire, I believe, at about 11:48. The jury selection continued thereafter until

December 20th, 12:18:07 to 12:20:07. And then we recessed and brought the jury back in January -- on the 16th of January.

And at that time, we swore the panel and we began the trial.

Counsel, do you take issue with that recitation of the time frames involved here?

MR. POWELL: No, Judge.

MR. BRESNICK: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Counsel, I will hear your respective positions at this point. You've had a chance to take a look at the situation, and I'll hear what you have to say.

MR. POWELL: Thank you, Judge. Judge, Your Honor's recitation of the -- of the procedural record is accurate and is undisputed. We don't dispute it in our papers as well. Our position, Judge, is relatively straightforward. We concede, Judge, that the docket sheet seems to suggest that the process of jury selection actually began at about 10:08 on the morning of December 18th. And that the Government, about an hour prior to the time that the parties appeared before Your Honor, had electronically filed his Section 851 notification.

Our position, Judge, despite the fact that there seems to be a suggestion in <u>US versus Reevus</u> (phonetic), is that electronic filing is sufficient to meet the filing requirements for Section 851, is that to interpret <u>Reevus</u> (phonetic) in that fashion actually deprives the defendant of

the legislative intent, the benefit that -- that Congress intended to confer upon defendants in Section 851.

Essentially, Judge, what the Government is permitted to do, if electronic filing is accepted, is to fail to timely notice a defendant in any meaningful fashion of the fact that the Government intends to rely on some predicate convictions.

Mr. Morris's circumstances back on December 18th were that he was physically here in the courtroom. There doesn't appear to be any record, and I don't find anything in the Government's papers, to suggest that the Government disputes that he was not physically served with the Section 851 notice, nor was counsel served with an 851 notice.

We concede, Judge, that there is a standing order in the Eastern District which suggests that filing by electronic filing pursuant to the -- to the local rule is sufficient for filing purposes. But I -- I take issue, Judge, with whether or not, when the standing order was prepared, it contemplated Section 851 consequences. And the consequences are significant. It's the last opportunity for the defendant to make a determination as to whether or not he should be put to his proofs, or whether or not the defendant should avail himself of an opportunity to enter into a guilty plea. A defendant who is not properly noticed, of course, cannot make that determination.

Our position is that electronic filing, despite the

standing order in the Eastern District, is insufficient to vindicate that prerogative that the defendant, in effect, has no notice, that the Government tends to rely on predicate offenses for purposes of handing his sentence if he's convicted at trial. The Government then has the ability to go forward with the trial. And if the Government is successful, as it has been in this case, defendant has to be in court to impose an enhanced sentence.

The sole purpose, it seems to me, of Section 851,

Judge, is to afford defendants a last opportunity, prior to the

time that the jury is impaneled, to make a decision as to

whether or not proceeding to trial is a prudent decision to

make. This defendant, because of the manner in which the

Section 851 motion was filed, was denied the opportunity to do

that.

There can't be any question, it seems to me, Judge, that there could not have been any discussion between Mr.

Morris and his counsel back on December 18, 2007, as to whether or not on that date he should proceed to trial. Or whether he should then make an effort to avail himself of a plea in the case short of trial, because he now has notice that the Government intends to rely on these predicate convictions in an effort to enhance his sentence. And in Mr. Morris's case in particular, Judge, because of the mandatory minimum in this case, which is a life sentence, certainly, that issue is an

Bresnick - Argument

issue of substantial magnitude.

Perhaps the most important decision that Mr. Morris had to make before going forward in this case was whether or not to place himself in jeopardy of an enhanced sentence, which would result in a life sentence, or availing himself of a plea and seeking to avoid the imposition of a life sentence by pleading guilty prior to the time of trial.

So despite the fact that <u>US versus Reevus</u>, which is the only Third Circuit case, Judge, that I find, seems to suggest that the -- the -- the standing order and the court rules are incorporated by reference into the 851 notice requirements. I would suggest to the Court that that's insufficient. That on its face, Mr. Morris is deprived of an opportunity to make perhaps the most important decision that he needs to make in terms of deciding whether or not to proceed to trial or to plead guilty.

For that reason, Judge, despite the fact that the Government -- and we concede that the Government electronically filed his 851 notice perhaps an hour or so before the commencement of jury selection -- that this Court should not deem as sufficient service under the circumstances, and that the Government should not be entitled to seek and/or obtain an enhanced sentence.

THE COURT: All right. Mr. Bresnick.

MR. BRESNICK: Yes, Your Honor. Good morning, Your

# Bresnick - Argument

Honor. Your Honor, as an initial matter, I just think it should be noted for the record that the defendant does not appear to be challenging the substance of the 851 information itself, but it's that he was, in fact, convicted of the convictions that are detailed in that 851 information, but is merely challenging the -- the service. Your Honor, the Government in this instance complied with all rules and regulations regarding service in this district. It electronically filed the document as it is permitted to do so, in fact, required to do so. And as the Government pointed out, local rule 5.1.2 indicates that electronic service in this instance constitutes service of the filed documents of all parties and shall be deemed as satisfying the requirements of the relevant Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure.

Moreover, the local rule state that registration as an ECF file user constitutes agreement to receive and consent to make electronic service of all documents. The Government did precisely what it was required to do in this case. I understand the defendant's argument here that perhaps he was in court already at the time that -- of the -- of the day the jury selection was scheduled to begin. And he claimed that he was deprived of -- perhaps to make an informed decision in this last night.

Your Honor, this is -- not that we need to get into this ultimate issue, but this is precisely why the Government

## Bresnick - Argument

believed that it's not until the jury is sworn, as opposed to

-- to when jury selection begins that the Government needs to

file the 851 notice. The defendant still had plenty of

opportunity to plead guilty the next day or the following day

or -- or many days after that, and he -- the jury wasn't sworn

until January 16, 2008. The trial didn't begin until that day.

The jury wasn't, in fact, selected until December 20, 2007. So

defendant had plenty of opportunity to decide to enter a guilty

plea.

So given that, Your Honor, and given the Government did precisely what it was supposed to do in terms of filing requirements, I believe that the 851 information is, in fact, sufficient and the enhanced sentence should apply.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. BRESNICK: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Counsel, I have reviewed the matter.

I've looked at the authorities that you've given to me, and I believe that the Government did do everything that it was supposed to do in this situation. The Government did give notice before jury selection began. And if that is the requirement, the Government satisfied it. If the requirement is that it's before the jury is sworn, they certainly satisfied it, because the jury was not sworn until a month later. I'm compelled to conclude that the 851 notice was proper under all the circumstances.

## Morris - Statement

Certainly, the Third Circuit can take a look at this and determine whether or not I'm correct, but the use of filing by ECF, the rules, the standing orders, all indicate to me that service was proper. So under the circumstances, I'm going to conclude that the defendant is, in fact, subject to the mandatory sentence that is required pursuant to that 851 notice.

All right. Counsel, anything -- yes, sir?

THE DEFENDANT: May I speak, Your Honor?

THE COURT: Certainly.

THE DEFENDANT: May I approach -- may I approach the podium?

THE COURT: You certainly may. (pause) Mr. Morris.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes. Within the 851 statute, it says that they did comply. They did comply as far as making the electric filing. I'm not disputing that. But I never had an opportunity -- you understand what I'm saying -- to more or less address the Courts on the matter. I never had an opportunity. And I wrote Mr. Finney in reference to that, saying that I never seen this motion. And -- and you know -- and I never had an opportunity to -- to even dispute the motion that the Government put in.

If we're here, and it's electrically filed, I'm not notified. And if -- and if counsel went back to his office and got this motion, that ain't effective, because they didn't --

# Morris - Statement 11 they didn't -- they didn't apprise -- they didn't make me aware 1 2 as to what -- what they -- they received. And I -- and I -- I wrote -- I wrote Mr. Finney in reference to this. 3 And Your Honor, another thing, I never would have 4 knew if I had tried to retain Ms. Hope Lefeber for appeal. And 5 6 she made me cognizant as what's going on as -- as to reference to the motion. She said, "Mr. Morris, are you aware that you 7 8 got an 851?" I said, "No, I had no idea." So if counsel did 9 get this motion, they're ineffective, and I let Mr. Finney 10 know. THE COURT: All right. Counsel, anything further? 11 12 MR. POWELL: I have nothing further, Judge. MR. BRESNICK: No, Your Honor. 13 14 THE COURT: The -- the sentencing Guidelines in this matter -- notwithstanding the ruling that I just made, the 15 sentencing Guidelines, based upon the defendant's position and 16 17 the Government's position, are 262 to 327 months, based upon an offense level of 36 and a criminal history category of four. 18 Counsel, I will hear anything more you want to say or 19 your client wants to say before I formally impose sentence. 20 21 MR. POWELL: Judge, we'll submit on the arguments from November 2nd. 22 THE COURT: All right. Mr. Morris, do you have 23 anything more you want to say with regard to this matter? 24 25 THE DEFENDANT: Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, why don't you come forward and I'll hear anything you have to say.

THE DEFENDANT: This -- it was one of those -- in reference to the probation, I was enhanced twice. I can see one year probation. And it's not on the record, but I received one year probation. I violated the probation. It wasn't over a year and a day, so it didn't violate 4A1.2. And I received three years, and I have a -- a simple assault. So what I'm saying is, I should be in category three and, hopefully, a level 36, because it should be four points instead of the seven.

THE COURT: Mr. Powell or Mr. Thompson, do you have anything you want to say to supplement that?

MR. POWELL: I'm sorry, Judge, can I have a moment with Mr. Morris?

THE COURT: You certainly may. (pause)

MR. POWELL: Judge, I'm looking at the pre-sentence report which was prepared by Probation, which indicates that there was a violation of probation after the 1994 offense, of which Mr. Morris was sentenced to three years incarceration concurrent to another indictment. Mr. Morris disputes that, if that's the case. I presume that the Probation Department reviewed the appropriate State Court directly. There will be no way for us, Judge, to determine whether or not this is an accurate representation of whether or not Mr. Morris's

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Powell - Argument
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         recollection is accurate.
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                   Obviously, Mr. Morris is the defendant, Judge.
         presuming that his recollection of what his sentence -- his
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         recollection is accurate, then he's correct, that would change
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         the -- the Guideline range in this matter because it would
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         change his criminal history category.
                   MR. BRESNICK: Your Honor, for the record, could I be
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         certain what paragraph of the PSR we're referring to?
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                   THE COURT: Are you talking about paragraph 112,
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         Mr. --
                   MR. POWELL: Page 20, Judge.
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                   THE COURT: Page 21?
                   MR. POWELL: Page 20, Judge.
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                   THE COURT: And it's paragraph 112?
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                   MR. POWELL: Yes.
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                   THE COURT: You're suggesting -- Mr. Morris is
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         suggesting that that conviction is not a conviction that should
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        be counted in this?
                   MR. POWELL: Well, Judge, the -- the record actually
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         indicates disorderly persons. Disorderly persons offenses in
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        New Jersey are not crimes. Crimes are --
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                   THE COURT: Well, it -- well, it also indicates
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         possession of cocaine, and the recitation of the facts outlines
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         that.
                   MR. POWELL: Well, that -- that's correct, Judge, if
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the original charge was possession of cocaine. But even possession of cocaine cases, Judge, can be remanded to the Municipal Court in New Jersey and handled under 2C:35 -- under 2C:35-10a, under 2C:35-10c, which is failure to turn over, even though it's an otherwise indictable offense (inaudible) disorderly persons offense that the quantity is a non-requirement. And since the record itself indicates disorderly persons, Judge, and a fine and no other penalty other than probation, the maximum probation that one could receive for a disorderly person in New Jersey is one year.

THE COURT: Well, how -- how then, could he be sentenced upon violation of the probation to three years?

MR. POWELL: It seems to me, Judge, that he couldn't. Either the record is inaccurate as to the sentence that was imposed, or the record is inaccurate as to the nature of the conviction. But the two can't be accommodated, Judge. It's one or the other.

THE COURT: Well, let's hear from the Probation Office.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I do have the documents, Your Honor. I have the order dated January 22, 1999. It's a Superior Court of New Jersey discharging the defendant's probation and sentencing him to a term of incarceration in a State prison. I also have a pre-sentence report. All of the documents were sent from the District of New Jersey. I have

## Powell - Argument 15 the indictment, the pre-sentence report, the judgment, the 1 parole, which Your Honor is welcome to look at or --2 THE COURT: Well, before --3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- the -- whoever wants to 4 look at it. 5 6 THE COURT: -- before we go any further, counsel, will you take a look at the documentation that the Probation 7 8 has and see whether we really have --9 MR. POWELL: That representation, however, Judge --10 THE COURT: -- an issue here? That representation makes sense. 11 MR. POWELL: The 12 -- the Probation officer indicated that probation was terminated and the defendant was then sentenced to three years 13 14 incarceration. He was sentenced to three years incarceration on a separate indictment from 1999. And it would make sense 15 that the underlying disorderly persons probation would have 16 17 been dismissed because he would not be subject to the State 18 prison sentence for a violation of probation. UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It said that probation was 19 20 revoked and then a term of incarceration was then imposed. 21 That's what it was. (pause) MR. POWELL: Judge, I just had a chance to speak with 22 23 Mr. Morris, and Mr. Morris disputes the accuracy of the record. Even though the record indicates that the probation was 24

revoked, Mr. Morris indicates, Judge, that probation was

terminated. That is that he paid the mandatory fines and that his otherwise one-year period of probation, which would have been the maximum that could be imposed for disorderly persons offense, was -- was discharged as opposed to being revoked and acquiring another sentence. I don't know how that can be resolved. The document that Probation has supplied to me indicates a conviction for a third-degree possession of cocaine. And it's not comporting with Mr. Morris's recollection to what the disposition is.

THE COURT: A third-degree possession of cocaine is punishable by what?

MR. POWELL: A maximum of five years in prison.

THE COURT: All right. All right. We're going to have the Probation Office make the records that we've been discussing here a part of the record of these proceedings. All right. Based upon the record as it presently stands, I am compelled to conclude that the Guideline range that I mentioned earlier is an accurate Guideline range, offense level 36, criminal history category four, Guideline range of 262 to 327 months. All right. Counsel, was there anything more before I formally impose sentence?

MR. POWELL: I have nothing, Judge.

MR. BRESNICK: No, Your Honor.

THE COURT: You want to bring your client forward,
Mr. Powell and Mr. Thompson. (pause) Mr. Morris, I am going

Morris - Statement/The Court - Sentencing 17
to impose sentence on you in a few minutes. Before I do that,
I will hear anything more you have to say. I will indicate to
you that you have made several objections here at these
proceedings, as objections are part of the record, and you will
have the opportunity to convince the Third Circuit Court of
Appeals that your position is the proper position. Other than
that, I will hear whatever more you want to say.

THE DEFENDANT: I don't know what more I can say. I believe Mr. Baukman spoke in volumes for me, you know what I'm saying, for me, as well as the other defendants who fought this trial earnestly. There's nothing more for me to say, you know what I'm saying? I look at the trial that -- you know what I'm saying, it was a trial that wasn't perfect. And -- and the constitution doesn't afford me a perfect trial, but it was fair, Your Honor. And I thank you for that opportunity. That's it.

Oh, one more. I'd just like to -- before I go out, I had a -- while I was incarcerated, I had a granddaughter.

She's 13 months now. I just would like to -- I never -- I never touched her. I like the smell of babies. I just want to touch my baby.

THE COURT: All right. I've indicated what the Guidelines are. I've indicated what the mandatory sentence is here. The crimes that were committed here and for which you are found guilty, Mr. Morris, are most serious

The Court - Sentencing

crimes. The drug conspiracy that the jury found you to be a part of was a multi-state operation. Huge volumes of drugs were being distributed. Huge amounts of money were involved. In fact, in -- in the search that was conducted at the Burden Hill property, they found more than a half a million dollars in cash packaged up, along with other indications of drug distribution. So the crimes that were involved here are of the most serious nature.

The -- looking at your background, Mr. Morris, you have seven prior convictions, eight arrests -- or five arrests for which you were not convicted. They were either dismissed or evidence was suppressed. So you have been involved in the criminal justice system over an extended period of time. It is unfortunate that you find yourself here, really.

The indications are that you came from a pretty good upbringing, and it would appear that you could have accomplished a great deal in your life without getting involved in the drug scene. The indications are that you finished high school. You were going to go on to college. You were going to play football, I believe, in college. Evidently an injury curtailed that. But it evidently also sent you down the course and brought you into this courtroom ultimately, which is very unfortunate because you didn't have to be here, Mr. Morris. You were fully capable of being a productive citizen. So it's a tragedy in that regard.

## The Court - Sentencing

The sentence that I have to impose here is obviously a sentence that's going to punish you. It's going to protect the public. It's going to deter others from engaging in this kind of conduct. And I really don't have any options at this juncture. Go ahead.

THE DEFENDANT: I'm going to respectfully ask that you give me the 262 in case the light comes on. I feel as though that would protect the public. And also, I look at that as enough time to be rehabilitated, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Well, Mr. -- Mr. Morris, I don't have any options. If the -- if this matter goes up to the Third Circuit and if they decide that the life -- mandatory life sentence is inappropriate, it will come back here to me for sentencing, and I will hear -- hear what you have to say at that time. But at this juncture, I have no alternative. All right? (No audible response)

Pursuant to the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984, it's the judgment of this Court that you, James Morris, be committed to the custody of the Bureau of Prisons to be incarcerated for a term of life imprisonment on Count 1. On Counts 52, 53, 54 and 55, the sentence is that you be incarcerated for a period of 48 months on each count to run concurrently with each other and concurrently with the sentence on Count 1.

Upon release from imprisonment, you're placed on supervised release for a period of ten years. The specific

The Court - Sentencing 20 conditions of supervised release are that you not possess 1 2 controlled substances, you not possess firearms, you not violate any State, Federal or local laws. I'm not going to 3 impose a fine. No useful purpose would be served by that. And 4 you are to pay the special assessments of \$500. 5 6 Do you understand the sentence, Mr. Morris? THE DEFENDANT: Yes, I do, Your Honor. 7 8 MR. BRESNICK: Pardon me, Your Honor. I believe Your 9 Honor has to pronounce the forfeiture as part of the sentence 10 as well. THE COURT: The forfeiture will -- order will be 11 12 signed. THE DEFENDANT: I wrote a letter in reference to 13 14 This alleviates from a forfeiture hearing? It precludes me from that, rather? I'm -- I'm not entitled to a forfeiture 15 16 hearing? 17 THE COURT: Do you have anything, Mr. Bresnick? MR. BRESNICK: Your Honor, the defendant would be 18 permitted to pursue whatever options are available to anyone 19 20 against forfeiture as --THE COURT: Well, there's no question about that --21 MR. BRESNICK: Right. 22 THE COURT: -- but --23 The question is, am I precluded from 24 THE DEFENDANT: 25 a forfeiture hearing? That's --

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The Court - Sentencing
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                  THE COURT: No, you're not.
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                  THE DEFENDANT: Well, I -- I would like to have one.
                  THE COURT: All right. We will schedule
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        a forfeiture hearing.
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                  MR. BRESNICK: Well, I -- I'm not sure what the
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        proper process is, Your Honor, but whatever the process is, the
        defendant would be entitled to it.
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                  THE COURT: Yes, indeed. All right. Mr. Morris, you
        do have a right to appeal. If you want to file an appeal, it
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        has to be filed within 14 days. We'll give you an attorney
        free of charge to file it. You have indicated a desire to
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         appeal. And you, just a few minutes ago, indicated that you
        had actually talked to an attorney with regard to an appeal?
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                  THE DEFENDANT: Well, yeah, what I said is that I
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        wasn't aware of the 851 motion. I tried to retain -- retain
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        Ms. Hope Lefeber for appeal, and she apprised me to this 851
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        motion.
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                  THE COURT: Well, is she representing your interest
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        on appeal or --
                  THE DEFENDANT: No, no. I believe Mr. Powell and Mr.
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         Thompson would.
                  THE COURT: All right. Mr. Powell --
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                  MR. BRESNICK: Well, Your --
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                  THE COURT: Go ahead.
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                  MR. BRESNICK: Your Honor, I'm only concerned because
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The Court - Sentencing 22 the defendant just got up before the Court and alleged that 1 2 they were ineffective. I'm not sure. THE COURT: There is certainly that -- that problem, 3 Mr. Morris. You indicated a few minutes ago with regard to 4 that 851 motion that the -- your counsel were ineffective. 5 THE DEFENDANT: Well, Your Honor, what I said -- what 6 I said is that if they were -- if they were apprised of it and 7 8 didn't make me aware of this, yeah, they were. I'm not 9 recanting that, they were. If they got this motion, they were. 10 THE COURT: Well, what I'm going to do is this. Mr. Powell and Mr. Thompson, you file whatever appeal is necessary 11 12 in accordance with your client's request, and then we will deal with counsel. 13 14 THE DEFENDANT: Right. You will have to deem if they're ineffective or not, correct? 15 16 THE COURT: Excuse me? 17 THE DEFENDANT: You would have to deem that they're ineffective or not, correct? 18 THE COURT: Well, ultimately that may come before me, 19 20 yes. 21 THE DEFENDANT: Yeah, yeah. THE COURT: All right. Anything further? 22 23 MR. POWELL: I don't have anything, Judge. MR. BRESNICK: No, Your Honor. 24 25 THE COURT: Recess.

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1	(Proceedings concluded at 10:13 a.m.)				
2	* * * *				
3					
4	<u>CERTIFICATION</u>				
5					
6	I, Brenda Boulden, court approved transcriber, certify				
7	that the foregoing is a correct transcript from the official				
8	electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-				
9	entitled matter.				
10					
1					
2	DATE BRENDA BOULDEN				
3					
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